



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier Bay National Park
and Preserve

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Glacier Bay News Release

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Humpback Whale Entangled in Line in Glacier Bay

A yearling humpback whale has been observed in Glacier Bay entangled in crab pot line. On June 6, 2006, a National Park Service pilot boat reported seeing the whale swimming on the surface near Bartlett Cove. Entangled in its tail was a line with a marker buoy attached to a sport fishing crab pot. The whale was able to swim slowly and covered a distance of several miles despite the fact that the line is still attached to a crab pot weighing approximately 80 lbs. that is being dragged under it.

National Park Service biologists and park rangers, who are trained and certified by the National Marine Fisheries Service to perform disentangling operations on whales, were dispatched to the lower bay waters of Glacier Bay to attempt to free the whale. The team attached two highly visible orange marker buoys to the line trailing behind the whale, then attempted to cut line entangling the animal using cutting tools designed specifically for this purpose. Despite being able to briefly get very close to the whale, their attempts to cut the line were unsuccessful. The whale was followed and monitored by park staff for over nine hours in this attempt. For safety reasons, the attempts to cut the line were ended at dusk.

Currently, efforts are underway to locate the entangled whale through aerial and vessel surveys. If located, efforts will be taken to make additional attempts to free the whale. Park officials are also attempting to ascertain whether or not the whale may have become disentangled on its own.

Humpback whales are Federally listed endangered species. This particular animal is known to have been born last year, and has been observed in the Icy Strait area once earlier this year.

Anyone sighting the whale is requested to immediately contact the National Park Service to provide the location of the sighting and direction of travel. The public is neither advised nor allowed to attempt to remove

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lines or buoys from an entangled whale, as this can be an extremely dangerous operation for both people and the animal in addition to being illegal under Federal law.

The National Park Service at Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve can be contacted at 907-697-2627 or on Marine VHF Channel 12 or Channel 16 with the call sign, "KWM 20 Bartlett Cove".